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# THE COMMON SCHOOL JOURNAL.

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No. 1.

## ADDRESS OF THE PUBLISHERS.

THE commencement of the Fifth Volume of this Journal affords the present Publishers the first opportunity they have enjoyed of saying a word in their own names, and of thanking those patrons and friends, who, in any way, by words or deeds, have encouraged them in the task they have assumed, of awakening the public mind to the great importance of procuring a more extensive circulation to the only publication in New England exclusively devoted to the improvement of what constitutes our glory and our strength,—the COMMON SCHOOLS. Something has been done during the past year to extend the usefulness of the Journal, but still, the circulation is too limited to reward Editor or Publishers, and by no means commensurate with the well-ascertained wants of the community. While every school district in the State of New York, (and the number is about eleven thousand,) is furnished, at the State's expense, with the District School Journal, published at Albany, so far are we behind that noble State in furnishing the means of improvement, that more than a hundred entire towns of Massachusetts do not take a single copy of our own Journal, although to teachers and school committees it must be the most useful guide and assistant that can be found. The District Library seems to be an appropriate place of deposit for the Journal, and we are happy to be able to say, that the districts are beginning to act in earnest upon the recommendation appended to this address. It is to be hoped that in this way, if in no other, every district will at length be supplied; so that every friend of education, however humble and retired, may be enabled to read and act upon the great subject whose statistics are nowhere else so well recorded, whose principles are nowhere else so ably discussed, but whose infusion into the general mind seems to be resisted by an indifference or apathy as discouraging as it is inexcusable. It would be a libel upon New England to suppose that the means to pay the annual subscription of one dollar, cannot easily be obtained by every citizen; that time for reading sixteen pages, once a fortnight, cannot easily be redeemed from business or pleasure; or that a taste for the substantial fare which is served up in the Journal, cannot be acquired by only a reasonable abstinence from the more amusing, but less profitable trifles, that threaten to engross the whole attention, and limit the intelligence of the present generation.

It is necessary only to allude to the eminent ability of the Editor, and to the rich treasure of practical knowledge laid up in the published volumes, to show what expectations may reasonably be indulged in regard to the future value of the Journal. The Publishers hope that its true object,—the dissemination and preservation of the laws and official papers relating to education; the discussion and elucidation of the various modes of instruction, and systems of education; and the gradual introduction into the schools of Massachusetts of all the improvements of other States and other Countries, will not be overlooked in forming a judgment upon its character and claims. Its volumes never were designed merely to amuse the passing moment, but to be a valuable depository of facts and opinions, a series of landmarks in the history of our schools, and an imperishable record of the wisdom or folly with which we carry out the noble design of the far-sighted founders of our Common Schools.

Respectfully,  
WILLIAM B. FOWLE AND NAHUM CAPEN.

P. S. To prevent misunderstanding, all subscribers who mean to withdraw their names and patronage from the Journal, will please, forthwith, to return this number, uninjured by writing or other defacement, to the Publishers, to whom all business communications are to be directed, (post paid.)

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*Recommendation of the COMMON SCHOOL JOURNAL, edited by HON. HORACE MANN, Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education, as a suitable Book for every District Library.*

"MESSRS. FOWLE AND CAPEN: Gentlemen,—The Common School Journal, of which you are the publishers, is so valuable a depository of laws and official reports on the subject of popular education, and is so enriched by numerous essays upon various modes and

subjects of instruction, that we consider it a very useful manual for all school committee men, teachers, and others concerned in the management of schools, and, of course, a very suitable work to form part of every District School Library.

"Signed,

"GEORGE B. EMERSON, President of the American Institute, &c.

"SAMUEL G. HOWE, Director of the Asylum for the Blind.

"CYRUS PIERCE, Principal of the Normal School at Lexington.

"H. HUMPHREY, Pres't of Amherst Coll., and Member of Board of Education.

"R. RANTOUL, JR., } Members of the Massachusetts Board of Education.

"EMERSON DAVIS, }

"N. TILLINGHAST, Principal of the Normal School at Bridgewater.

"ALEXANDER H. VINTON, Rector of St. Paul's Church, Boston.

"WM. J. ADAMS, Principal of Hancock Grammar School, Boston.

"HENRY BARNARD, Superintendent of Common Schools in Connecticut.

"R. S. STORRS, D. D., of Braintree."

WITH mingled feelings of encouragement reflected from the past, and of hope shining out from the future, we commence the Fifth Volume of the Common School Journal.

We trust that it is no proof of arrogance to believe that this Journal has already accomplished some good, nor any evidence of presumption to look forward to its accomplishing more. And under what higher or more inspiring motives can a man labor, than those of good done, and good expected?

In an introductory article, like the present, may we not be allowed, as in former years, to enter into some general considerations respecting the nature and object of the great work of education? Our intention is, that this volume shall contain more of detail, of specific instruction and precept, respecting modes and processes of teaching, than any of its predecessors has done. On the present occasion, therefore, will it not be appropriate to indulge in a few contemplations of a more general and comprehensive character, of which, even in his most minute and formal operations, the educator should never lose sight? Though sailing but short distances, from port to port, yet our course must be directed by the great lights in the sky.

Since our last Annual Address, several periodicals devoted to this cause have ceased to exist, having failed from want of patronage. Among the number was that able and well-conducted work, the Connecticut Common School Journal. This failure of others, however, prompts us to persevere, lest, in the silencing of its advocates, the cause itself should be forgotten.

That this noble cause is postponed, and thrust aside, is the very reason why we should labor the more to rescue it from neglect. The indifference with which it is regarded by the multitude, measures the energy of the efforts needful for its promotion. The activity of its friends must be coëxtensive with the apathy of others. It is the cause whose worth remains unrecognized that demands a champion. As witnesses of the amazing indifference which pervades the public mind respecting its highest interests, we see the extent of the reformation to be effected. The inference from others' lukewarmness is, not that we are to be cold, but that we should be fired with a compensating zeal. The mass of mankind are not always to be sensual, grovelling, groping in intellectual darkness, and mistaking their bane for their bliss, because their vision is too dim to distinguish between them. They are not always to be tormented with superstitious fears, because they cannot understand the language of wisdom and goodness which is every where speaking

around them ; or, what is still worse, to cast aside all restraints, indiscriminately, in order to escape the thralldom of causeless apprehensions. It is impiety towards Heaven to suppose that such is the irreversible condition of the human race.

#### HUMAN COÖPERATION ESSENTIAL TO HUMAN HAPPINESS.

But here a great truth bursts upon us :—God loves us too well to satisfy our wants independently of our own exertions. If he should immerse us in *passive* enjoyments, the keenest delights would soon lose their zest, and pall upon our sated desires. Should he volunteer to rescue us from the consequences of our own folly or blindness, without coöperative efforts on our part, we should soon become so besotted as to be heedless of danger, and so impotent as to be unable to escape it. Hence he has benevolently endued us with powers, so that we can put forth exertions for our own welfare, and placed us in a system of things where our highest welfare can never be reached without those exertions.

This law of voluntary effort, as essential to the highest reach of enjoyment, is stamped on every part of our nature. We can never feel the keenest relish for food or beverage, except we ourselves have sharpened the appetite that is to taste them. The most luxurious viands are little better than a loathing to the palate of the slothful ; while manly exercise and honest toil nectarize the homeliest provisions. Among all the pleasures of the intellect, there are, and there can be, none so rich as those which are bought and paid for by study. It is only after the profoundest contemplation, the solitary vigil, the intense, unrelaxing persistence of thought, that the new-discovered truth bursts upon us, with the most brilliant and long-enduring splendor. A spider may draw a line as exact to geometrical truth, as those which Newton discovered in the motions of the spheres ; but does that creature derive from the exercise of its instinct, a conscious, fervid delight, like that which ravished the soul of the astronomer, when, after long strivings and reachings, he grasped the principle which controls the planetary movements ; or when, with his own hand, he wove the brilliant tissue of the rainbow ? Emphatically does this principle hold true in regard to all the happiness pertaining to the moral affections or sentiments of our nature. No joys thrill the soul so deeply, or so long, as those which flow from generous self-sacrifice. If any man aspires, not merely to the highest post of honor, but to the highest rewards of bliss, let him enlist as one of the life-guards of Truth, when she is menaced by danger. In vain do they talk of happiness who never subdued an impulse in obedience to a principle. He who never sacrificed a present to a future good, or a personal to a general one, can speak of happiness only as the blind do of colors. These principles,—few, though of mighty import,—must be kept in view by all who would act as guides and counsellors for any portion of their fellow-beings ;—whether the mother in her nursery, the teacher in his school, or the philosopher, promulgating truths to regulate the vast concerns of mankind. The highest service we can perform for others, is to help them to help themselves.

#### AIDS DERIVED FROM NATURE AND PROVIDENCE.

But, after all, Nature has assigned limits and conditions to the powers she has given. Unfurnished by the instrumentalities, unbreathed upon



by the effluences of Nature, man can accomplish nothing. He works, but it is her energies which are working around him and within him. This is not less the doctrine of the philosopher than of the apostle,—“Work, — for it is God who worketh in you.” There are two forces,—man, and the agencies that encompass and pervade him. These act and react upon each other. In a state of human perfectibility, they would perfectly coincide and harmonize. A state of human imperfection is nothing more than man struggling, either ignorantly or wilfully, against the conditions of his being,—against the laws of the system in which he is placed. But when man becomes the antagonist of Omnipotence, how suddenly does destruction overwhelm him! His hand is no more impotent to intercept the thunderbolt and hurl it back, in defiance, to the skies,—his command is no more powerless to arrest the earth as it bears him around in its orbit,—than his soul is to suspend the moral laws, or to evade the moral conditions, upon which his happiness has been made dependent. He created neither himself nor the system in which he finds himself. He cannot pervert or bend one jot or tittle of that system from the fulfilment of its destiny. His only alternative is to conform himself to it,—that is, to the will of Him who made it.

#### NECESSITY OF GENERAL LAWS.

Now, is it not obvious that a system so stupendously comprehensive, embracing ourselves,—body, intellect, spirit,—as one party, and all the resistless agencies of nature and of the Author of nature, as the other party,—embracing existences which, though not coëval in their beginning, are to be coëternal in their duration;—is it not obvious that the infinite relations of such a system must be arranged and administered by LAWS as fixed, as immutable, as eternal, as the Being who created them? Otherwise, would not that system instantaneously become chaos?

#### WHAT EDUCATION IS.

To know these LAWS, and to be animated with a disposition voluntarily and lovingly to obey them, is *to be educated*. Not to know them, or not voluntarily and lovingly to observe them, is to be uneducated, or miseducated. To know and to observe one of them, is to be educated in the proportion of one to infinity; or, rather, it is to be uneducated in the proportion of infinity to one. To finish education, then, must be to study the last problem in the volume of immensity; it is to close the last day in the calendar of eternity; it is to comprehend all that the Omnipotent has done, to understand all that the Omniscient knows. To have finished education in any part of this life, is the boast and complacency only of fools. The knowledge to be acquired is as boundless as the universe, and the process of education as enduring as immortality.

There is another, and perhaps a more palpable mode of illustrating the vastness of the work of education. It consists in an enumeration of things to be learned. If time and the occasion permitted, it would be an agreeable exercise to indicate some of the more conspicuous of the fields of knowledge that lie around us, and with the names and some of the properties of which we have been made acquainted by the great discoverers of our own and of other times. Every department of nature, every class and family of objects, whether animate or inanimate,

rational or irrational, is the foundation of a science,—that is, of an indefinite number of facts and principles which bear a definite relation to each other. There is a science founded upon the human body, and upon each of its senses. There is a science for the intellect, another for the passions or propensities, and another for the moral sentiments. There is a science which embraces the relations of men to each other, and another science for the relation they bear to their Creator. There is a science for each great department of the animated world ; for the insects that bask in the sunbeam or creep upon the earth ; for the inhabitants of the flood, of the field, of the air. There are sciences for all ranks of vegetative life, from the hyssop that groweth upon the wall, to the cedar of Lebanon. There is a romantic and magnificent science relating to the structure of the earth, by which the successive layers that compose the solid crust of the globe,—deep down as human art has ever yet won its adventurous way, or as the upheaving convulsions of nature have disclosed its recesses to the gaze of man,—are found to be so many leaves of a volume whereon are inscribed the slow-written records of its history for countless centuries. There are sciences, also, for its minerals, its rocks, its waters. Some objects have various sciences, founded upon their different elements or properties ; as the atmosphere, for instance, which has one science in relation to the lungs, founded upon its different ingredients ; another in relation to the ear, founded upon its laws of vibration ; another in relation to winds, founded upon its density and temperature ; another in relation to dynamics, founded upon its gravity and expansibility, and so of other properties. There is a science for the heat that warms us, for the light which gladdens our eyes, for the electric fluid as it flashes its exhilarations along our nerves, or coruscates in the Northern Aurora ; and there is a science as kindred to devotion as to knowledge, which is founded upon the greater and lesser lights in the encompassing firmament.

These are only a few of the more prominent and luminous of an infinite variety of works by which we are surrounded ; yet each science founded upon them has a depth and an expanse of principle and of fact sufficient to fill the longest and most assiduous life with delightful and instructive employment. Different tastes or talents prompt the devotees of knowledge to select different fields of investigation, but no division of labor can so apportion the inquirers as to compass the whole. Every explorer, on his return, reports that an unknown realm,—a *terra incognita*,—stretches onward beyond the spot where he erected his furthest standard of discovery. Far outward, beyond the extremest verge which his strength could attain, the expanding horizon shut down, not exterior to, but upon the object he would have reached ; and could he have approached that limit, the horizon would have receded and disclosed a still unoccupied domain. All pioneers, towards whatever point of the compass they direct their steps, and however diversified the wonders they discover, bring back the common report that the outposts and frontiers of knowledge have reference to them, the explorers, and not to the subjects of their exploration. The outer boundary or circumference of which they speak, is that of their vision, and not of nature's works. It was only in the infancy and poverty of knowledge that men claimed to have reached its *Ultima Thule*.

What a grand and instructive moral may we derive from this survey ! It is here that the Creator speaks to our senses, not less than to our

souls, of his immensity. Here he teaches his infinite attributes by illustration, making them not only spiritually intelligible, but visible, tangible, palpable,—forever revealing more than we have compassed, and lifting the clouds from an unexplored territory beyond, whose vastness is always proportioned to the altitude from which we view it. He trains the inquiring mind to the habit of expecting more as it sees more, and thus the revelation of our own expanding capacities, and of the inexhaustibleness of the Creator's works, becomes the daily lesson of our lives. Infinitely less would have sufficed to fill the longest life with employment, and the loftiest heart with devotion; but this excess and redundancy were necessary to exemplify the attributes of the Infinite Author.

Some parts of this universal knowledge are necessary to our daily well-being, while others minister only to our occasional and profounder contemplations. A beneficent Providence has ordained that what is most essential may be most easily acquired. Health is more essential than astronomy, and therefore its laws are more easily learned. Common sense is better than genius, and hence its bestowment is more universal. Society might subsist, and enjoy a good degree of happiness, without any knowledge of the learned languages or of the higher mathematics, but it cannot endure, in any tolerable state, without honesty; and therefore honesty may be more cheaply and universally inculcated, than Latin, or Greek, or the differential calculus, can be taught. In the benign order of the creation, necessities are first provided for,—embellishments, superfluities, luxuries, afterwards, if at all.

In a practical and limited sense, then, the process of education is the orderly and symmetrical development and strengthening of all our powers, and the acquisition and cultivation of such a knowledge and purpose as will enable us to adapt ourselves to the benign and wonderful laws of the system in which we are placed. Here we may see delineated and colored, as on a chart, the successive stages in the work of popular education. That on which the continuation of human existence is founded, is first to be attended to, because, without it, as a basis, no institution for secular knowledge, for morality, or for religion, can stand. This is as plain as that we must fix our fulcrum before we can raise our weight.

#### THE BODY.

The body comes first in order as a means, though last as an end. It is first in order, because with an unsound physical organization, with obtuse senses and unmanageable nerves, the energy and purity of an angel's spirit would be crippled and in bondage. Disease, suffering, unnatural bereavement from premature death, are the consequences of a violation of physical or organic laws. And these consequences are visited equally upon the body, whether the laws of health and life have been violated through ignorance or through perversity; because it is our duty to learn as well as to obey, and we are punished for ignorance as well as for undutifulness. And though these calamities affecting the body should sweep over the world like a flood; though every sense should become a living wound, and every organ and joint a rendezvous for pain; though mankind were smitten with disease for their transgressions of the laws of health, until the earth should become one vast lazarus-house,—yet we should have no right to expect a miracle for



our healing. First knowledge, and then obedience, must be like the sprinkling of paschal blood upon the lintel and door-posts of every house, if we expect the angel of destruction to pass by.

#### THE INTELLECT.

1. *The Acquisition of Ability.*—There is a twofold object in the training of the intellect. One is to quicken its perceptions; to enable it to see effects in causes, and conclusions in premises; to endue it with inventive ability, that it may devise new modes for doing with facility, cheapness, and despatch, what before had required cost and a series of laborious processes; and also that it may achieve works before impossible. The other object is to store the mind with that useful information which others have sought out and placed within our reach, and which, being now the common property of mankind, every man may come to the treasury, and appropriate to himself whatever share he will.

The intellect is the light of the mind. The appetites, impulses, affections, sentiments,—whatever we please to call them,—have their objects of desire; but they know not how to obtain them. The intellect points out or devises the means by which their ends can be reached. They inform the intellect what they want; the intellect discerns and adopts the measures necessary to their gratification. The intellect performs the office of a pilot; but what shall become of the vessel and its treasures, if the pilot is blind?

The difference between men in regard to their bodily vigor, fleetness, dexterity, is great, but it is as nothing compared with the differences in their intellectual strength and sagacity,—in their celerity and grasp of thought. The physical difference between a race like Goliath, Hercules, or Ajax, and a race of pygmies, is incomparably less than that between such luminaries as Bacon, Newton, Franklin, and the mental glow-worms who require surrounding darkness in order to become visible. Swift's story of the Brobdingnagians and the Lilliputians is hyperbole and a caricature, because we have never seen such disproportions in the stature of men; but had his comparison been instituted between different intellects, then, though the inequality had been a thousand times greater, we should have recognized nothing but literal truth in the picture. What profound and difficult problems one mind will solve before another can comprehend the terms which express them! To what altitudes, over what an expanse of thought, will one mind fly, while the wings of another are vainly striving to lift it from the earth! With what beauty, variety, brilliancy, one soul will flash and coruscate, while another wears forever the same lifeless and leaden hue! *Mystery* is a word of no fixed and universal signification; for what is an inscrutable mystery to one mind, is simplicity itself to another. In the race, in the ring, in the game, we see the difference between speed and sluggishness, between dexterity and clumsiness, between a vision like the eagle's and one like the bat's; but these disparities become insignificant when we contrast the perceptions of a mope with the mighty capacities of a genius or a sage. A puny arm may take a hammer, and tap, tap, pat, pat, with it upon a rock, to the utmost of its strength, but no glimmer of fire shall follow its strokes, though it should tick on forever; but let a strong man wield the same instrument, and strike the same substance, and at the first sweep of his gigantic arm, the hidden fires shall stream forth, as though he had

crushed a star ! And thus will a feeble mind labor forever, but still in vain, to accomplish what a strong one will perform at will.

2.—*The Acquisition and Utility of Knowledge.*—The second object of intellectual education is, that of storing the mind with knowledge. The discoveries of knowledge in any one age have been few ; but, when once discovered, knowledge is imperishable, immortal. Hence we have the accumulations of all the ages that have passed, and these form a treasury which no man can exhaust. It is open to himself, it is open to his offspring and to their offspring in endless succession. All are heirs, excepting those who disinherit themselves.

All knowledge is useful, though all is not equally so. It may be misused, or abused,—as the fire which tempers wintry winds may be misused to kindle a conflagration ;—but that is not the fault of the knowledge itself, or of its discoverer, but of the possessor, who abuses it. When some one asked Dr. Franklin of what use some of his profound scientific speculations could be, he replied by asking, “Of what use are babies ?” If a man has no capacity of looking more than six months into futurity, it becomes not only a practical but a very sensible question *for him*,—“Of what use are babies ?” and if he should chance to have one, he would do well to exchange it, pound for pound, with some shepherd or swineherd, and obtain other live stock, which, at the end of six months, might be turned to such a practical account, as he would be able to appreciate. But if a man has mind or ability to look forward, and see a feeble infant, under fit processes of education, unfolding into a public benefactor,—into a Washington or a mother of Washington,—then, instead of an argument to prove its value, he needs capacities to appreciate its worth. In regard to the uses of knowledge, the difficulty consists not in pointing them out, but in knowing where to begin and when to finish. An attempt to describe the uses, pleasures, blessings, of knowledge, would be like an attempt to clasp the huge round earth in our arms ;—we should fail, not because there is no earth, but because of its vastness. When the Pennsylvania Dutchman said that all he wanted his boys to know was, how to count a hundred dollars and to row a boat to New Orleans, he did not think that if others had not known vastly more than this, there would have been no dollars to count, nor New Orleans to go to.

Let me ask the man who undervalues all educational means, whether his own knowledge,—such as it is,—is worth any thing to him. Is it of any service to him to know the way to mill ? To this an affirmative reply would be folly, if some one else had not known how to build a mill. And to construct a mill which will do its work with cheapness, exactness, and despatch, requires,—if it be a water-mill,—that some one should have had a scientific acquaintance with all the fundamental laws of mechanics, with the motion and pressure of fluids, the inertia of bodies, the means of accumulating many small forces upon a given point, and of diffusing a great force, existing at a single point, over extensive surfaces. Now, this leads back, not only through all modern improvers of machinery, but to the time of Archimedes and Euclid ; because the principles which their profound minds brought to light are in operation, not merely in the flour-mills of Buffalo or the cotton-mills of Lowell, but in the simple hand-mill, which assists in preparing the beverage for the morning meal.—Or, if it be a steam-mill, then chemi-



cal as well as mechanical knowledge has been required for its construction; and without the labors of Priestley and Davy, of Arkwright and Fulton, his knowledge of the way to mill would have been worthless.

Again; is it any benefit to a man to know of a market-place where he or his servant can find food for his appetite as soon as he has an appetite for his food?—no matter whether that market may be at the corner of the next street, or at the centre of the village, or at the metropolis of the State. Certainly not, if that market had not been supplied with commodities from the four quarters of the globe. Now, to mention but one prerequisite to the existence of this market,—the art of navigation must have existed, or it could not have been supplied with tea and coffee, with sugar and rice, with the cooling and delicious fruits of the tropics, or with its various other articles, whether beverage, aliment, or condiment. But the art of navigation requires not only a knowledge of mechanical forces, of naval architecture, and of geography, but of astronomy also. The mariner could not have found a secure way from a port on the other continent across the pathless ocean to our shores, without the preëxistence of that scientific knowledge which was wrought out by the minds of Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo, and Newton. His landmarks are not on the earth, but in the sky. In vain would he set his watch on the silent deck of the vessel, if God had not set Orion and the Pleiades to watch in the firmament above, and had not also created god-like intellects to discover their paths through the heavens. Navigation also presupposes a knowledge of optics, or the laws of light; and, of course, a knowledge of the construction and use of the telescope. When a ship has been driven by adverse winds and currents until her path is wound into a coil, and crossed and tangled in inextricable confusion, it is knowledge alone which can lift the sextant to the skies and tell, within a hand-breadth, on what spot in the waste of waters, in what direction, and how far from home, the voyager may be. When the vessel is buffeted by a tempest, and the waves smite it with their Titan blows, and the impending thunder-cloud overhangs it, like a downward-pointing volcano of the skies, what, then, would become of itself and its freight of human lives, if the builder had not studied the cohesion and strength of materials, and all the varied action and reaction of assailing and resisting forces; or if the electrician had not known how to prepare a conductor which would turn the lightning aside? Without all this, of what value would a knowledge of the way to market be, or where the market to go to?

Again; let us ask the questioner of the utility of knowledge, whether it is of any service to him to know how to tell the time of day, or of night, by a clock. But the affirmative answer which he must give, would be false, unless some artist could have made that instrument; and for the construction of one even of moderate perfection, it presupposes a knowledge of the effect of dryness and moisture, of heat and cold, upon different materials;—it even presupposes a knowledge of the motion of the earth, and of the relative attracting forces of sun, and moon, and planets. Before the hands of the time-piece could be taught to indicate the revolving hours of the day upon the dial-plate, the philosopher must first have studied the dial-plate of the skies on which the hours of eternity are measured.

And so it is in regard to all the useful arts, and to all the revelations of science. Had the great illuminators of mankind been contented with

a less degree of knowledge, whatever proportion had been deducted from the extent of their acquisitions, just so much must have been deducted also from the value of our limited attainments.

Knowledge, indeed, has the highest economical or money value. If its pecuniary worth were understood, and it were for sale in the market or at the brokers' shops, no other commodity would be in such demand, nor would any stocks be quoted at so high a premium. Were such the case, those hoarders and misers who now decry the universal diffusion of knowledge loudest, would be the most eager competitors for its possession. Knowledge possesses a pecuniary value, because it enables one man to do the work of many, and accomplishes in a day what would otherwise require years. Bodily we are weak; it is through the mind only that we are strong; and the race waxes great and powerful just in proportion to the extent of its mental cultivation. The Anaks of mankind are not the men of great bodies, but of great souls. Among the Jews, a day's journey was thirty-three miles; now, two hundred, or even three hundred, can be performed. Twenty-eight pounds has been called the load of a marching soldier, and twenty miles a day's march, but a mechanic now makes a machine which will transport a hundred tons, and which travels its twenty miles, not in a day, but in an hour.

"An ancient historian states, that the mere labor of raising from the ground the stones which compose the great pyramid of Egypt, and fastening them in their proper places, occupied 100,000 men for twenty years; and this number was exclusive of those who were employed in hewing and transporting the materials. It has been calculated that the same labor might be performed by 36,000 men using the steam engines of England, in a single day;" that is, by about one third of the number of men, in less than one six-thousandth part of the time. It is true that it would cost something to build the engines, but their value would hardly be lessened by a single day's work.

What would the ancients have thought of some mighty animal,—some hippogriff,—which could take a vessel of a thousand tons, and sweep onward with her to any part of the world, and then return, laden with the productions of other countries, to the place of departure? Yet this marvel, in our day, is continually performed;—not performed, however, by any fabled monster or being of supernatural powers, nor by the strength of human muscles,—for if the physical might of all the eight hundred millions of the race could be concentrated in one arm, it would be insufficient for the purpose,—but it is performed by the mightier power of the mind. Knowledge is the only sorcery used.

But it may be said that the number of men is few who think there is already too much knowledge in the world, and who deem it the first duty of patriotism to extinguish existing lights rather than to kindle more. Supposing such to be the case, yet all these views are just as applicable to those who would counsel us to stop where we are, or who would slacken our speed in the career of improvement, as they are to such as would countermarch mankind towards barbarism. Nay, these views are just as applicable to those who would bate one jot or tittle from our highest efforts to accelerate progress, as they are to those who would sound a retreat. But it cannot be denied that there is a large and influential class in this country who express general satisfaction or contentment with what has been done, but are hostile to further

measures for improvement. These constitute the *stand-still* party. But the stand-still party would have stood as still at any other point in the progressive advancement of mankind as at this. Five, fifty, five hundred, or five thousand years ago, had they lived, their motto would have been, for the evil as well as for the good,—“Ask for the old paths.” With this class, the fashion in which their last coat was cut ought to be the fashion for all coats till doomsday. They would have advocated the standing posture in the time of Alfred, when scarcely one hundred men in all England could read a verse in the Bible. In the time of Pontius Pilate they would have applauded the crucifixion, because the ushering in of Christianity was an innovation of the movement party. And among the Egyptian Ptolemies, when every man, like a tree, was doomed to fill, through life, the place in which he was born, they would have belonged to the Old School. Had such men, in fine, been born during an eclipse of the sun, they would have remonstrated against the innovation of his returning beams; or, if born in Noah’s ark, would have protested against the subsiding of the deluge.

#### THE MORAL NATURE.

But the finishing work, the highest and noblest office of education, pertains to our moral nature. Perhaps there is no doubt that the perceptions of infinite intelligence would always be coincident with the promptings of infinite goodness; and that a being endowed with these attributes would see that whatever would best promote the highest good of all others, would best subserve his own;—and hence there could be no conflict between selfishness and benevolence in such a mind. But we are creatures whose intelligence, at best, is limited. We have dropped our sounding-line but a few fathoms into the depths of omniscience, and our race has not yet fulfilled even one of those great cycles of time which are but seconds in the calendar of eternity. Besides, among all the works of God, there is nothing so heterogeneous and self-contradictory as the nature of man. Now, he blasphemes with the impiety of a fiend, now he adores with the fervor of a seraph. With one faculty of his nature, he burns with destruction and revenge; with another, he melts at the sufferings of a callow brood, or, in sympathy, suspends his step, lest an insect should be crushed by his foot-fall. That figment of the ancients was an inadequate, though a just, representation, even of a good man, which likened him to a charioteer drawn by steeds, one of whom had wings by which he would soar to heaven, while the weight of his fellow held him to the earth. Under all the influences which human art, and nature, and Providence, shed around us, it is the work of education to reduce these conflicting powers to harmonious action. Let us not deny that, with the aids which Heaven vouchsafes to all who seek for them, the appetites and propensities of the young can be subjected to the restraints of reason and conscience. Let us not say, the pupils are intractable and incorrigible, until the teacher has ceased to be ignorant and heedless. If benevolence were half as much stimulated as the love of gain now is,—at the fireside, the table, the market-place, and in all the walks of business,—the days of oppression and injustice would soon be numbered. If all the counsels, the examples, the institutions of the world, were as skilfully adapted to develop the conscience of the child, as they are to arouse his ambition, his love of applause and of power, the history



of the world would be written henceforth as the history of another race. What sublimer sight can ever attract the gaze of angels to the abode of mortals, than that of a man possessed of power which no other human power can overcome, or surrounded by darkness which no eye can penetrate,—with no barrier between him and the object of his intensest desire, save an invisible, impalpable, intangible MORAL LAW, and yet he stretches forth his hand, not to grasp the unprotected prize, but to smite the legions that would tempt him to offend. And if higher spirits look upon this glorious spectacle with complacency, must they not regard with equal delight the moral efforts of those who produce it?

But to accomplish these great objects,—to ward off diseases from the body, and errors from the mind, and endue both with greater majesty and force; to promote the sentiments of benevolence, justice, reverence, to an undisputed supremacy in our spiritual nature, so that they may rule our impulses and affections, as a benignant patriarch would preside over his family;—all this requires a degree of knowledge, skill, wisdom, purity, of which the world is yet most lamentably deficient. Let it be understood, too, that such great ends can never be effected without severe and long-enduring labor. God can *speak* whatever he will into existence, but man must *work* into existence whatever good he desires. And hence the necessity, not merely of a general aim or resolve to effect a noble object, but of learning or devising the means by which it can be attained.

It would rescue education from much unjust disparagement, and would greatly enhance its claims upon the attention of the wise and good, if men would consider how necessary a knowledge of all its detailed processes and subordinate principles must be to its successful prosecution, and how little has yet been done, on the part of the community at large, to acquire this knowledge. Every operation, however magnificent it may be, is only a collection of efforts individually minute. If we would execute, or even perfectly comprehend, any work, its details must first be mastered. Take a ship, for instance,—that beautiful messenger-bird between nations, an object which painting and poetry love like a child,—and consider what wearisome mechanical processes must precede the birthday of its perfect beauty;—how much culling and sorting of materials, how much sawing and hammering, how much carpentry and smith-craft, before its graceful buoyancy and its imperial strength are united in a form

“Which walks the waters like a thing of life.”

And thus, in all cases, are a series and combination of minute efforts necessary to the accomplishment of a grand result.

Of those, then, who have the spirit to engage in the work of human amelioration; who desire to abate the *unnecessary* evils which now prey, like a vulture, upon the happiness of mankind; who yearn for human regeneration, and cannot be contented to take their departure from this world, until they have added something to its happiness, and subtracted something from its miseries;—of all these we most earnestly solicit an attention to the principles and the processes on which the great work of education must be conducted; and, however feeble and insufficient our efforts may be, we will endeavor to throw, here and there, a beam of light along their paths.

**THREE HORSES AND ONE HUSBAND.**—A reverend minister of the kirk of Scotland sympathized deeply with one of his parishioners, who, in the course of a few weeks, was reduced to poverty by the death of three horses; and to add to the trial, her husband took ill and died. The minister wrote a petition for her, soliciting her neighbors' support, in the following manner:—"The bearer, widow —, has met with a severe loss by the death of three Horses and her Husband, making in all four, since May; and on that account I would recommend her to your support."

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**EDUCATION.**—A distinguished English divine has said, there are several ways for reforming men, but the most likely and hopeful reformation of the world, must begin with children. A GOOD EDUCATION may be an effectual *prevention* of evil,—whereas all other ways are but *remedies*.

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[For the Common School Journal.]

#### ON THE UTILITY OF LARGE HAND IN TEACHING PENMANSHIP.

"Let us remember that to innovate is not always to reform; and that old truth is somewhat preferable to new error."

Almost every writer of late, who has alluded to the subject of teaching penmanship, has loudly censured the ancient plan of "straight strokes," and what are commonly, though rather inelegantly, termed "pot-hooks and hangers;" contending that it is worse than useless to waste so much valuable time in learning that which is seldom or never required in active life. These advocates of educational reform, in the department of writing, would have the tyro inducted at once into a rapid, current hand;—asserting, with singular gravity, that, if such a plan were adopted, the art might be taught with the greatest ease! They would have the fledgling soar from the nest on tiny wing to the very summit of Caligraphy!

"Much time," says Dr. Alcott, "is spent in our schools in writing large text, or copy hand, with the letters in some instances nearly half an inch long. Now, in full view of all the reasons which are urged in favor of this practice, I cannot help regarding it as grossly erroneous. After a few copies of the elements have been written, it appears to me that a plain, coarse, running hand is sufficiently large to answer every important purpose. If a pupil can write a good business hand with rapidity and a moderate degree of elegance, he will find no difficulty in forming a few letters on a larger scale, should occasion require it."—*Essay on teaching Penmanship.*

Now, with due deference, this seems to me not only contrary to the uniform practice of the most skilful and experienced teachers of the art, but contrary to reason and common sense. As well might we expect a person to paint a picture, combining the force and energy of an Angelo, with the graces of a Raphael, and the coloring of a Titian, without first going through the initiatory steps of the painter's art;—as well attempt to rival a Paganini on the violin, without first learning the notes of music, as to expect to attain a masterly use of the pen,

without going through the initiatory process of large hand. Reader, have you ever watched a child when commencing his lessons in penmanship? If not, do so, and you will find that he invariably seizes the pen,—if one may be allowed the expression,—with an iron grasp, as if he thought it was still instinct with life, and that, unless he held it fast with might and main, it would take to itself wings and fly away. His thumb and fingers are compressed together with force; their ends all concentrated within the compass of a sixpence; and, if required to make any change, he never, for a moment, ventures to relax the tenacity of his grasp, but with his left hand carefully and cautiously pushes or pulls the pen into the desired position. Now, unless this firm grasp,—this straining of the muscles,—this contraction of the fingers, are effectually conquered, and a *habit* of holding and managing the pen properly is formed at the outset, innumerable difficulties will ensue,—the pupil's progress will be greatly impeded, and his hand-writing will ultimately *degenerate* into an illegible scrawl. But by what means is this habit of holding and managing the pen in an easy, natural, unconstrained manner to be acquired? And how is the child to attain that muscular facility in the use of the pen which is to enable him, in after-life, to write with freedom and ease, and without labor? The obvious answer is, By a careful, long-continued "drilling" in the practice of LARGE TEXT COPIES,\*—commencing with characters and letters of such a size as cannot be executed with facility, unless the hand and pen are kept in an easy, unconstrained position, and thus *compelling* the learner to release his grasp, and to give free play to the muscles. But it is replied that "the art of writing is so simple and easy as not to require all this discipline,—this training of the hand and fingers." Simple indeed, theoretically, and easy of comprehension. It is one thing, however, to know how an operation is performed,—quite another to perform it. The mind may seize, with great ease and rapidity, the principles, and comprehend the whole *rationale* of almost any manual art; and yet, when the unpractised hand attempts to perform that which seemed so easy, it is found to be far beyond its powers of execution, simply from the want of habit,—from the want of what is scientifically called *manipulation*. Of this, so many instances must be hourly falling under the notice of every one, that it would be a work of supererogation to exemplify them. Amidst the thousand arts of life, there are few that we cannot fully comprehend, and see and feel that the means of performing them are very simple and easy; but let any person attempt to practise one of these simple arts for the first time,—be it the threading of a needle, the planing of a board, or, what is more to our purpose, the drawing of a circle, a square, or even a perpendicular line,—and he will find it by no means so easy. He will find that some practice is essential to a ready and skilful performance of the simplest art. If, then, to the hand whose powers of movement,—

\* It is not contended that large hand, in itself considered, is of any great utility; but this is not the question. There are many things necessary to be learned in the course of education, not for their own sakes merely, but as a *means* to train and discipline the mind, or body, in order to enable it to effect other things. A boy is not taught to dance, in order that he may dance a hornpipe in the streets; but that he may acquire a suppleness of limb and an ease of manner. The thing taught is the medium by which we reach the end. "To correct any awkward habit in the form or inclination of the letters," says Barrow, "one of the most useful expedients is, to make the pupil write a *much larger hand* than he has ever before attempted."



whose muscular action,—has, by exertion, been considerably developed, this habitude, or repeated doing, is essential for the ready performance of any mechanical operation, how much more indispensably necessary must it be to the undisciplined hand of childhood!

It is an axiom to the truth of which the accumulated experience of past and present ages bears testimony, that man is the creature of habit. Skill is the effect of habit, and “no habit can be acquired without a frequent and regular repetition of the act to which it bears a reference; for the same number of acts which, when closely following each other, generate a habit, would fail to have this effect if separated by long intervals; and the more difficult the attainment of the habit, the more necessary it is that the endeavors to acquire it should be constant and regular.” And further, wherever there is a tendency to a bad habit, recourse must be had, of necessity, to a series of acts of a contrary or counteracting tendency. From the foregoing considerations, then, it inevitably follows,—

1. That the art of writing, though simple in its nature, and easy of comprehension, requires careful, long-continued, and oft-reiterated practice, to give that ease and freedom which constitute its essentials;—and,

2. That as there exists, in the unpractised hand of youth, a tendency to contract the muscles, and restrain the movements of the fingers, it is necessary to employ some means to counteract this tendency, and prevent it from settling into a habit, which would prove fatal to the attainment of fine penmanship.

This counteracting influence can only be found in the practice of writing **LARGE TEXT COPIES**; and when once the necessary preliminary of a free play of the muscles is attained, ease and elegance will follow,—we might say almost spontaneously.

The grand secret in teaching writing is to bestow much attention upon a little variety. The necessity of a continued repetition of the elementary forms, or component parts of the letters, till each can be executed with facility and correctness, cannot be too strongly insisted on. But as this constant reiteration would be somewhat too tedious for an age so fond of novelty and change as that of childhood, we should at least keep as close to the maxim as possible, and, by a judicious intermixture of a few closely-connected and slightly-differing forms, contrive to fix the attention during the initiatory stages; and, at the same time, insure a frequent repetition of the elements. The letters should be analyzed and presented in the order of their comparative simplicity, each step being an amplification of the preceding one. A gradual, methodical increase of difficulties ought to be carefully maintained. “The method of teaching any thing to children,” says Locke, “is by repeated practice, and *the same action done over and over again, until they have got the habit of doing it well*;—a method that has so many advantages, whichever way we come to consider it, that I cannot but wonder, (if ill customs could be wondered at in any thing,) how it could possibly be neglected.” Again; “Not only children, but every one else who would do any thing well, should never be put upon too much of it at once, or be set to perfect themselves in two parts of an action at the same time.” We have here the highest authority insisting most strenuously on the very points which we have been laboring to enforce, viz.:—

1. That it is only by constant reiteration and persevering efforts, that any degree of ease and elegance in the use of the pen can be attained.

2. That the child should not advance too hastily ; but proceed, by natural and easy gradations, from the simplest elements to the more difficult combination of letters and words.

If we look to the every-day practice of mankind, we shall find that a similar course is pursued in the study of all other arts. The conscientious teacher of drawing will require the pupil to practise his lessons on a large scale, at first, in order to train and discipline the hand, and to establish a habit of executing the simple elementary forms with ease and correctness. He, too, will insist on his pupil's mastering, step by step, the rudiments of his art, viz., the straight line in all its positions,—horizontal, perpendicular, and oblique ; and in all its combinations, of the square, the triangle, the parallelogram, &c.,—before he will suffer him to attempt the formation of the curve line ; thus proceeding, by easy and natural gradation, from the simple to the complex. The skilful teacher of music will, in a like manner, require his pupil to obtain a correct habit of executing each individual note before he permits him to practise the scales ; and it is only by slow and careful steps that he is allowed to advance to the more difficult exercises.

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PRETTY GOOD.—The celebrated Mrs. Robinson had written a poem entitled "Sappho and Phaon." Anxious, as all literary ladies are, to have their charming effusions put favorably before the world, Mrs. R. wrote a confidential note to a leading newspaper in London, in which she said,—

"Dear Sir: Do let me have a few puffs for Sappho and Phaon.

"Yours, M. R."

The note was despatched to the office in the Strand, by a servant. Now, it happened that there lived in the Strand, close by the printers, a popular pastry-cook, named Boaden, to whom, by seeing the name over the door, Mrs. R.'s man took the note ; to which she received this answer :—

"J. Boaden's respects to Mrs. Robinson ; having sent so late, all the puffs are gone ; but he forwards a dozen gooseberry tarts, which he hopes will do for the young ladies as well."

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TIME.—Nothing is more precious than time, and those who misspend it are the greatest of all prodigals.

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LEXINGTON NORMAL SCHOOL. The next term of the Lexington Normal School will commence on Wednesday, the 4th inst. All who intend to present themselves for admission to the school, are requested to do so on the first day of the term.  
*Lexington, Jan. 2, 1843.* SAMUEL J. MAY, *Principal.*

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